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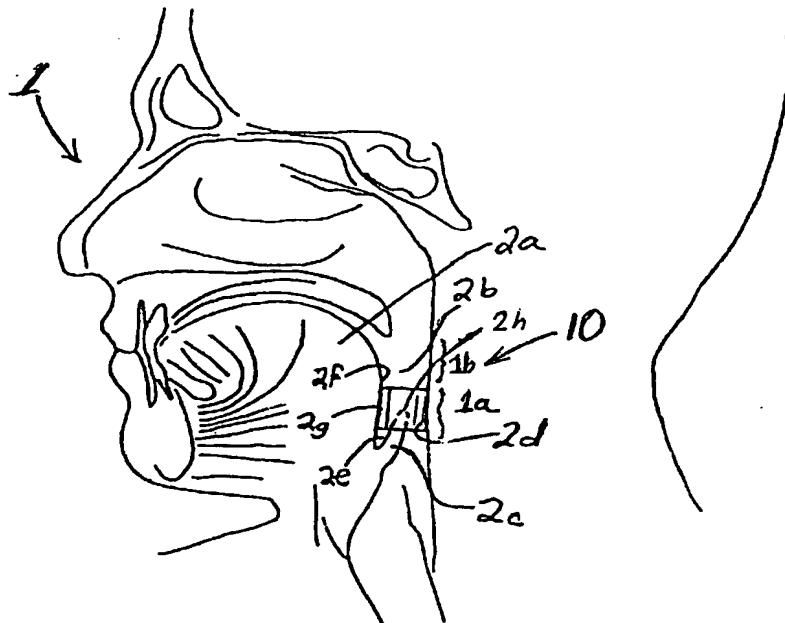
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR TREATING SLEEP APNEA



(57) Abstract: An apparatus and method for treating sleep apnea and/or snoring is provided. The apparatus includes an appliance sized and structured to be placed in the pharyngeal region of a human or animal and being effective in treating sleep apnea and/or snoring, for example in maintaining openness of an oropharyngeal region of a human or animal during natural sleep, advantageously while not interfering with normal functioning of the epiglottis. The appliance may be made of a super elastic material, for example, Nitinol, and may be submucosally implanted in the pharyngeal walls.

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US CL : 128/848, 898

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
U.S. : 128/848, 898, 897, 200.24

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Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EAST search terms: sleep apnea or snoring or anti-snoring, pharyngeal or oropharyngeal, nitinol

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6,250,307 B1 (CONRAD et al.) 26 June 2001 (26.06.2001), entire document.	1-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15, 19-29, 31-41, 43-65

Y		7, 10, 12, 16-18, 30, 42
X	US 6,450,169 B1 (CONRAD et al.) 17 September 2002 (17.09.2002), entire document.	1-6, 9-11, 13-15, 19- 28, 30-41, 44-57, 59- 65

Y		7-8, 12, 16-18, 29, 42- 43, 58
Y	US 5,355,874 A (BERTRAM) 18 October 1994 (18.10.1994), whole document.	7, 16-18, 42, 45
Y	US 6,358,274 B1 (THOMPSON) 19 March 2002 (19.03.2002), whole document.	10, 17-18, 45
Y	US 5,494,029 A (LANE et al.) 27 February 1996 (27.02.1996), whole document.	10, 12, 30, 45

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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